

COUNTRY Siam

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SUBJECT Pibul Cabinet Selections - Reaction of Extremist Military Group

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1. The extremist military group was displeased with several of Luang Pibul's cabinet choices, particularly those of Nai Pathom Pothikaseo, Deputy Minister of Communications, Nai Sawet Pienphongsan, Assistant (Deputy) Minister of Finance and Nai Kitcha Wathanasin, Assistant Minister of Commerce. Members of the military group have warned both Nai Pathom and Nai Sawet that if they provoke an open Parliamentary clash between the Pibul Government and the Democrats, they will be physically punished.
2. Their main objection to Nai Pathom is that he is "too close" to Luang Thamrong Nawassat. Pathom was a classmate and close friend of Thamrong at Thepaarin School. It is rumored that Pathom was financed by Thamrong in his successful campaign for a seat in the House of Representatives.
3. One of the grounds for the extremist military group's disapproval of Nai Sawet is his association with Luang Vichit /family name not given/ Sawet was Vichit's secretary during the time that Vichit was Pibul's Minister of Finance (before V-J Day).
4. Nai Kitcha is more openly opposed by the military group than either Pathom or Sawet. Kitcha left the Democratic Party and "sold out" as a "political fortune hunter". An even more important reason for this opposition to Kitcha is the fact that his father is a full-blooded Chinese.
5. To pacify the military extremist "hootheads", Pibul called a meeting at Suan Kulab Palace on 11 April to review the cabinet list with them. At this meeting it was suggested by the group that Vice Admiral Luang Nawa Vichitr be invited to join the cabinet to offset possible Royal Navy opposition. However, Admiral Nawa refused and was backed up in his decision by Vice Admiral Luang Singh Songgramchai.
6. At the same meeting it was decided to place Colonel Phao Sriyanon in charge of the Criminal Investigation Division and of the military clique's (and Pibul's) anti-Chinese campaign. When Luang Chatrakarn Kasel, Director General of Police, heard of this development, he told Pibul that he was going to resign. Pibul persuaded him to stay on and take charge of "purely Police matters".

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